

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8262
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4298

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MILI, LE, IS, SY, US
SUBJ: ISRAEL AND THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS

REF: TEL AVIV 9347

1. WE APPRECIATE MOST USEFUL REFTEL ON ISRAEL'S CURRENT
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. WE AGREE WITH
ANALYSIS AND HAVE SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS TO ADD FROM
PERSPECTIVE OF BEIRUT. WE BELIEVE THAT ACTIONS OF CHRISTIAN
MILITIAS AND THEIR LEADERS HAVE:

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A. MADE PARTITION MORE LIKELY
B. MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR PRESIDENT SARKIS TO
ESTABLISH A VIABLE POLITICAL ORDER;
C. INCREASED THE CHANCES OF MAJOR COMBAT ON
LEBANESE TERRITORY.

2. THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS ARE INDIRECTLY AT LEAST

RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE VIOLENCE NOW WRACKING
LEBANON. SOME RECENT EXAMPLES:

A. ON JUNE 13 ARMED MILITIA UNDER PHALANGE CONTROL
ATTACKED THE NORTH LEBANESE TOWN OF IHDIN AND KILLED TONY
FRANJIYAH, HIS WIFE AND THEIR THREE YEAR OLD DAUGHTER,
AS WELL AS 30 OTHER PEOPLE. THIS ACT, WHICH WAS NOT
ONLY EGREGIOUSLY BRUTAL, WAS ALSO IN PART DIRECTED AT
THE SYRIANS, WHO ARE CLOSE TO THE FRANJIYAHS.

B. SINCE THE FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS IN FEBRUARY,
THERE HAS BEEN CONSTANT CHRISTIAN SNIPING AT SYRIAN
POSITIONS. THIS SNIPING PLUS THE ASSASSINATION OF
FRANJIYAH AND HIS FAMILY WERE ACCORDING TO SYRIAN SOURCES
THE UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THE BOMBARDMENT OF EAST BEIRUT FROM
JULY 1-6.

C. AFTER THE JULY 6 CEASE-FIRE, CHRISTIANS
CONTINUED INTERMITTENTLY TO SNIPE AT THE SYRIANS. ON
MOST DAYS, THE SYRIANS SHOWED GREAT RESTRAINT AND DID
NOT FIRE BACK, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE TAKING FIVE OR SIX
CASUALTIES A DAY, ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES.

D. THIS SNIPING, PLUS THE PROBABLY MURDER OF ONE
OR TWO SYRIAN SOLDIERS IN HADATH, PRECEDED THE LATEST
TRAGIC SHELLING OF THAT BEIRUT SUBURB.

3. THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE ALSO CONSISTENTLY
REFUSED TO ALLOW PRESIDENT SARKIS TO EXTEND HIS
GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY INTO CHRISTIAN AREAS, EXCEPT
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UNDER CHRISTIAN TERMS. TWO RECENT EXAMPLES:

A. SINCE JULY 18 PHALANGE MILITIA HAVE REFUSED TO
ALLOW EXIT OR ENTRY OF DOCKWORKERS INTO BEIRUT PORT
BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEPLOYED PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM
RATHER THAN CHRISTIAN LAF TROOPS TO SECURE THE
AREA.

B. ON JULY 22 PHALANGE PARTY MILITIAMEN KIDNAPPED
AND SEVERELY BEAT TWO LEBANESE POLICEMEN MANNING A
ROADBLOCK, BECAUSE THESE POLICEMEN HAD HAD THE TEMERITY
TO ARREST A PHALANGE PARTY MEMBER WHO WAS CARRYING AN
M-16 RIFLE AND HAND GRENADES.

4. CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE TO THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY HAS NOT
BEEN LIMITED TO THE BEIRUT AREA. CHRISTIAN LEADERS HAVE
CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED: (A) THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT SARKIS
TO SEND THE ARMY TO THE SOUTH, AND (B) THE EFFORTS OF
UNIFIL, WHOSE PRESENCE THE GOL HAS FORMALLY ENDORSED,
TO DEPLOY TO BORDER AREAS IN SOUTH LEBANON. CHRISTIAN
MILITIAMEN HAVE SAID THAT THEY WOULD FIRE ON LEBANESE
OR UN UNITS IF THEY TRIED TO ENTER THE BORDER REGIONS.
A NORWEGIAN UN OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF ON JULY 22 THAT NORWEGIAN
SOLDIERS HAD RECEIVED MORE FIRE FROM THE CHRISTIAN

MILITIAS THAN THE PALESTINIANS. UNIFIL COMMANDER
ERSKINE ASSERTED TO US OFFICIALS THE SAME DAY THAT CHRISTIAN
MILITIAS, NOT PALESTINIANS, WERE UNIFIL'S BIGGEST
OPERATIONAL PROBLEM.

5. THE CHRISTIANS HAVE CONSISTENTLY OBSTRUCTED
PRESIDENT SARKIS' EFFORTS TO USE THE ADF TO RESTORE ORDER,
EVEN WHEN THE ADF WAS CLEARLY OPERATING UNDER THE
LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT. CAMILLE CHAMOUN
PERHAPS BEST SUMMED UP THE MARONITE ATTITUDE ON THE ADF
IN PARTICULAR AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOL IN GENERAL.
ASKED BY JOURNALISTS ON JULY 9 IF CHRISTIAN LEADERS
WOULD SUBMIT TO AN ORDER OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES
FOR THE ADF TO OCCUPY POSITIONS IN EAST BEIRUT,
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CAMILLE CHAMOUN REPLIED: "WE RESPECT LEBANESE AUTHORITY.
BUT WE WILL NOT SUBMIT TO ANY AUTHORITY IF THAT
AUTHORITY IS WRONG. AND SUCH AN ORDER WOULD BE AN
ERROR."

5. IN SUM, THE GREATER ISRAEL'S SUPPORT TO THE CHRISTIAN
MILITIAS, THE MORE LIKELY IS VIOLENCE WITH THE SYRIANS,
WITH UNIFIL OR WITH LEBANESE ARMY UNITS THAT DEPLOY
SOUTH. THE GREATER THE ISRAELI SUPPORT, THE LESS LIKELY
PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL BE ABLE TO BUILD A VIABLE
POLITICAL ORDER. THE GREATER THE ISRAELI SUPPORT, THE
MORE LIKELY MAJOR COMBAT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARABS ON
LEBANESE TERRITORY. PARKER

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